

Message Text

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16

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 EB-11 NEA-10 AF-10 EUR-25 OPR-02

A-01 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 OMB-01 DRC-01 /190 W

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R 020850Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5588

INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 4798

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MY US IS

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER'S CONCERN FOR MIDDLE EAST SITUATION.

SUMMARY: MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER RAZAK CALLED IN AMBAS-
SADOR NOVEMBER 1 TO EXPRESS CONCERN OVER MIDDLE EAST
SITUATION IN ORDER BE ABLE TELL PARLIAMENT HE HAD DONE SO.
HE INDICATED AWARENESS U.S. DOING EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER
ACHIEVE PEACEFUL RESOLUTION THIS PROBLEM AND THAT HE DID
NOT UNDERESTIMATE DIFFICULTY OF TASK. RAZAK ALSO ACKNOW-
LEDGED DANGER OF ADDITIONAL DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST U.S.
BY STUDENTS SHOULD ME SITUATION WORSEN AND SAID THIS
WOULD HAVE TO BE WATCHED CAREFULLY AND AN ATTEMPT MADE
TO INTERVENE BEFORE IT TOOK PLACE. NO REFERENCE WAS
MADE TO HANCOCK TRANSIT OF MALACCA STRAIT. AMBASSADOR
WAS HEARTENED BY MODERATE AND EVEN-HANDED APPROACH TAKEN
BY PM. END SUMMARY.

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1. PRIME MINISTER RAZAK CALLED ME IN AFTERNOON OF NOVEMBER 1

TO EXPRESS HIS GENERAL CONCERN ABOUT SITUATION IN MIDDLE EAST, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE HIGHLY EMOTIONAL PUBLIC ATTENTION BEING DIRECTED AT THIS PROBLEM IN MALAYSIA. HE SAID THAT HE SPECIFICALLY WANTED TO EXPRESS THIS CONCERN TO ME SO THAT HE COULD MAKE A STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT, WHICH OPENS NOVEMBER 26, TO THE EFFECT THAT HE HAD DONE SO. I INTERJECTED TO SAY THAT I HOPED HE WOULD ADD THAT IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WAS DOING EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO ENCOURAGE AND ACHIEVE A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE LONG-STANDING PROBLEM BETWEEN THE ARAB STATES AND ISRAEL. HE SAID HE WOULD BECAUSE IT WAS HIS ASSESSMENT THAT THIS WAS WHAT THE UNITED STATES WAS ATTEMPTING TO ACCOMPLISH.

2. RAZAK DID NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE INFLAMMABLE EFFECT OF MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS ON CERTAIN GROUPS IN MALAYSIA. HE THOUGHT THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS DIRECTED AGAINST THE AMERICAN EMBASSY WERE IN PART STIMULATED BY THE RECENT STUDENT ACTIVITIES IN THAILAND, BUT HE ALSO RECOGNIZED THE CAPACITY OF THE STUDENTS, PARTICULARLY IN KUALA LUMPUR WHERE SO MANY OF THEM WERE CONCENTRATED, TO CAUSE DISRUPTION IF AN ISSUE WERE PRESENTED TO THEM. HE SAID MINISTER GHAZALI SHAFIE AS WELL AS HIMSELF HAD SUCCEEDED IN "COOLING DOWN" THE STUDENT LEADERS AT THE TIME OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS, BUT THE STUDENTS HAD A SHORT ATTENTION POINT AND THEY COULD BE INCITED TO A NEW FLARE-UP.

3. I SUGGESTED THAT THIS POSED HAZARDS FOR BOTH OF US IN THE FUTURE. I DID NOT EXPECT THAT THERE WOULD BE AN INSTANT RESOLUTION OF THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM; RATHER THERE WOULD LIKELY BE TOUGH NEGOTIATIONS AHEAD, AND IN THE PROCESS OF BACKING AND FILLING ON BOTH SIDES, WE COULD EXPECT THE USUAL RECRIMINATIONS AND COUNTER-RECRIMINATIONS. IN THIS ENVIRONMENT AMPLE OPPORTUNITY WOULD ARISE FOR FRESH STUDENT OUTBREAKS. RAZAK AGREED AND SAID THAT WE WOULD OBVIOUSLY HAVE TO WATCH THE SITUATION CAREFULLY AND ATTEMPT TO INTERCEPT SUCH DEVELOPMENTS BEFORE THEY COULD MATURE.

4. I TOOK THE OCCASION TO EXPRESS APPRECIATION TO THE PRIME MINISTER FOR THE HIGHLY COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES OF THE ROYAL

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MALAYSIAN POLICE IN PROVIDING PROTECTION TO OFFICIAL AMERICAN PERSONS AND PROPERTY. HE SAID HE WAS OF COURSE PLEASED THAT NO SERIOUS DAMAGE HAD OCCURRED DURING THE DEMONSTRATIONS AND EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT, FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST, THERE WOULD NOT SEEM TO BE ANY FURTHER DANGER. HE CHARACTERIZED THE BOMB EXPLOSION AT THE LINCOLN CENTER AS A CLEAR-CUT COMMUNIST ACTION TAKING ADVANTAGE OF GENERAL STUDENT UNREST.

5. I ASKED RAZAK IF HE HAD ANY SUGGESTIONS AS TO HOW WE SHOULD PROCEED TO ACHIEVE A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM. HE SAID THE USG WAS CLEARLY EXAMINING ALL THE INGREDIENTS, AS WELL AS REQUIREMENTS OF THE SITUATION, AND THAT ANYTHING HE WOULD ADD WOULD BE SUPERFLUOUS. HE SAID HE DID NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE DIFFICULTY OF BRINGING ALL THE STRANDS OF THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM TO A POINT WHERE THEY COULD TIE TOGETHER.

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH HE MUST BE UNDER PRESSURE FROM EXTREME MUSLIM ELEMENTS, I AM HEARTENED THAT PRIME MINISTER RAZAK CONTINUES TO TAKE A MODERATE AND EVEN-HANDED APPROACH TO THIS SITUATION, BOTH OUT OF A GENUINE FRIENDSHIP AND APPRECIATION FOR THE UNITED STATES AND FROM A DESIRE TO AVOID THE CONSEQUENCES THIS COULD HAVE FOR INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT BY SCARING AWAY AMERICAN INVESTORS.

7. FROM THE FIRST THE GOM CLEARLY HAS SUPPORTED THE ARAB SIDE, AND WHILE THE GOVERNMENT-INFLUENCED PRESS CONTINUES TO REPORT THE ARAB POINT OF VIEW EXCLUSIVELY AND ANTI-U.S. EDITORIALS HAVE APPEARED, THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF HAS NOT ONCE PUBLICLY CRITICIZED THE U.S. ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, NEITHER HAS HE APPLAUDED SOVIET SUPPORT FOR THE ARABS, EVEN WHEN HE SPOKE BEFORE THOUSANDS OF DEVOUT MUSLIMS ON THE EVENING OF THE LARGEST STUDENT DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THIS EMBASSY (OCTOBER 16). FOLLOWING THE GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE TO GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF GENUINE NON-ALIGNMENT, HIS MOST EXPLICIT STATEMENT TO DATE (FBIS BANGKOK 231325Z OCT 73) HAS SIMPLY CALLED ON THE U.S. AND THE U.S.S.R. TO WORK TOGETHER WITH ALL OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES AND THROUGH THE UN TO BRING ABOUT A LASTING PEACE. MOREOVER, THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS GOVERNMENT, STANDING BY THEIR POLICY TO

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AVOID CONTROVERSY ON THE STRAITS ISSUE UNTIL IT IS DECIDED BY A UN LOS CONFERENCE, HAS THUS FAR ELECTED NOT TO REACT TO THE RECENT TRANSIT OF THE MALACCA STRAIT BY THE USS HANCOCK.

8. I BELIEVE, THEREFORE, THAT RAZAK'S EXPRESSED SYMPATHY WITH AND SUPPORT FOR USG EFFORTS TO BRING PEACE TO THE MIDDLE EAST ARE GENUINE. UNLESS HE IS PLACED UNDER NEW AND STILL UNFORESEEN PRESSURES, I BELIEVE WE CAN COUNT ON HIM NOT TO IMPEDE THESE EFFORTS IN ANY WAY THROUGH ANTI-U.S. STATEMENTS OR ACTIONS DESIGNED TO MOLLIFY EITHER DOMESTIC PRO-ARAB ELEMENTS OR THE ARAB COUNTRIES THEMSELVES.

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